

Ultra-light plane lands on Gold Coast beach after engine failure

By Bianca Banchetti and [Lucy Murray](#)

Beachgoers at Surfers Paradise were startled when an ultra-light plane made an emergency landing on the sand after its engine failed mid-flight.

No-one was injured when the two-seater aircraft glided onto a strip of beach just after 9:00am on Saturday, after taking off from nearby Jacobs Well.

Gold Coast Life Guard James Dornan has been on beach patrol for 15 years, but said he had never had a rescue quite like this.

"I've done plenty of rescues over the years but I've never actually had to rescue a plane before," he said.

The light plane was towed away with a tractor after it landed on a stretch of sand between Northcliffe Surf Life Saving Club and Broadbeach SLSC, about 50 metres behind beachgoers.

"It was definitely an experience. Hopefully we don't have any more planes crashing on our beaches and hopefully I won't have to do it again," Mr Dornan said.



Photo: Surf lifesavers had to tow the ultra light plane from the beach. (Twitter: Gemma Franks)

The pilot, Mark Waterford, has been flying regularly for 12 years and said the trip was not what he had in mind.

"The engine just decided to retire on me — early Christmas," Mr Waterford said.

He said the engine cut out mid-air about 500 metres above the water and 100 metres from the beach.

"Well, for every take-off there has to be a landing. It's just on the sand, that's all. If the beach was crowded I would have had to go for a swim," he said.

Surf Life Savers and emergency crews assisted Mr Waterford to dismantle the aircraft and move it off the beach.

"I actually felt a bit sorry for him [the pilot] because he didn't plan for this," Mr Dornan said.

"It would have been a long day trying to get that off the beach without the support."

Despite the events, Mr Waterford is determined to get back in the sky.

"I'll have to beg, borrow another plane, until I can get this one in the air. Why would it? It's fun — it's safe," he said.

There was no damage to the plane, but the Civil Aviation Safety Authority has been notified of the incident and will investigate.